

CHAPTER XIV

ARIUS AND ATHANASIUS

WE have seen how, at the conclusion of the Council of Nicaea, it looked as if the Church had entered into her rest. The day of persecution was over; Christianity had found in the Emperor an ardent and impetuous champion; a creed had been framed which seemed to establish upon a sure foundation the deepest mysteries of the faith; heresy not only lay under anathema, but had been reduced to silence. Throughout the East—the West had remained practically untroubled—the feeling was one of confidence and joy. Constantine rejoiced as though he had won a personal victory; his subjects, we are told,* thought the kingdom of Christ had already begun. When Gregory, the Illuminator of Armenia, met his son, Aristaces, returning from Nicaea and heard from his lips the text of the new creed, he at once exclaimed : "Yea, we glorify Him who was before the ages, by adoring the Holy Trinity and the one Godhead of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, now and for ever, through ages and ages."

* *De Vita Const**, ui., c. 14.